U.S. Patent Appln. No. 10/038,719
Amendment Dated Dec. 7, 2005
Reply to Office Action of Oct. 7, 2005
Docket No. BOC9-2001-0025 (271)

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the instant application:

Listing of Claims:

1.   (Currently Amended)   A method of connecting businesses through common interests and for facilitating business relationships among businesses comprising:

identifying a plurality of businesses to participate in an online business registry;

storing business profiles comprising business attributes in an online business registry, wherein each business profile is associated with one of the identified businesses and includes for each identified business a corresponding customer list, and wherein the business attributes corresponding to each stored business profile are classified into one of a plurality of access levels;

responsive to a query from an inquiring business, searching said online business registry to locate at least one business having a business profile including at least one business attribute corresponding to said query;

determining whether the inquiring business and at least one located business are competitors based upon a comparison of customer lists;

restricting access of the inquiring business to less than all of the plurality of access levels of business attributes of the at least one located business if the at least one located business and inquiring business are determined to be competitors;

establishing at least one communications link between said inquiring business and said located business according to at least one business attribute of said business profile of said located business, wherein said identified businesses comprise said inquiring business and said located business.

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2.   (Previously Presented)   The method of claim 1, wherein said online business registry conforms to a Universal Description Discovery and Integration (UDDI) specification, and wherein said searching step comprises searching said online business registry according to said query, wherein said specified business attribute is common to said inquiring business.

3.   (Original)   The method of claim 1, wherein said storing step comprises storing business attributes selected from the group consisting of business identity information, business description information, and communications information.

4.   (Currently Amended)   The method of claim 1, wherein said establishing a communications link step comprises extracting said communications information from said business profile of said located business, wherein said online business registry categorizes business profiles according to at least one of business function and market segment, and wherein said online business registry includes security features to restrict access to business profile information based upon established categories.

5.   (Original)   The method according to claim 3, wherein said storing step further comprises:

defining access rights to said business profiles;

defining permissible communications links and points of contact as business attributes within said business profiles; and

defining selected business attributes of said business profiles as private.

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6.   (Previously Presented)   The method of claim 1, wherein said establishing a
communications link step further comprises authenticating at least said inquiring business.

7.   (Currently Amended)   A method of connecting businesses through common
interests comprising:

storing business profiles for a plurality of businesses, said business profiles
comprising business attributes in an online business registry, wherein each business
profile is associated with one of said plurality of businesses, wherein each business
profile identifies a corresponding business by market segment occupied and business
function performed by the corresponding business, and wherein the business attributes
corresponding to each stored business profile are classified into one of a plurality of
access levels;

responsive to a query from an inquiring business specifying at least one business
attribute, locating within said online business registry business profiles corresponding to
said specified business attribute;

determining whether the inquiring business and at least one located business are
competitors based upon a comparison of market segments and business functions
corresponding to the inquiring business and at least one located business;

restricting access of the inquiring business to less than all of the plurality of access
levels of business attributes of the at least one located business if the at least one located
business and inquiring business

identifying within said located business profiles references to other business
profiles contained within said online business registry; and

determining whether said other business profiles include business attributes
corresponding to said query, wherein said plurality of businesses comprise businesses

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associated with said located business profiles, businesses associated with said other business profiles, and said inquiring business.

8.   (Previously Presented)   The method of claim 7, further comprising:

establishing a communications link between said inquiring business and at least one of said other businesses having a business attribute corresponding to said query, wherein the communication link is established according to business attributes of said at least one other business.

9.   (Original)   The method of claim 7, wherein said locating step locates within said online business registry business profiles corresponding to said specified business attribute, wherein said specified business attribute is a business identity.

10.   (Original)   The method of claim 7, wherein said locating step comprises locating in said online business registry, business profiles associated with said specified business attribute of said query, wherein said specified business attribute is common to said inquiring business.

11.   (Original)   The method of claim 7, wherein said storing step comprises storing business attributes selected from the group consisting of business identity information, business description information, and communications information.

12.   (Previously Presented)   The method of claim 11, wherein said establishing a communications link step comprises extracting said communications information from said business profile of at least one of said other businesses, and wherein said online

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business registry conforms to a Universal Description Discovery and Integration (UDDI) specification.

13.   (Original)   The method according to claim 11, wherein said storing step further comprises:

defining access rights to said business profiles;

defining permissible communications links and points of contact as business attributes within said business profiles; and

defining selected business attributes of said business profiles as private.

14   (Original)   The method of claim 11, wherein said establishing a communications link step further comprises authenticating at least said inquiring business.

15.   (Currently Amended)   A system for connecting businesses through business profiles comprising:

an online business registry configured to store business profiles for a plurality of participating businesses, said business profiles comprising business attributes, and said business attributes including communications information for establishing a communications link to each of the participating businesses;

a registration application configured to collect said business attributes of said business profiles and store said business profiles within said online business registry;

a search engine configured to receive queries and search said business profiles to locate at least one other business profile corresponding to said query, wherein one of said participating businesses utilizes said search engine to obtain information about another one of said participating businesses; and

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a communications engine configured to establish a communications link between at least two businesses of said participating businesses having profiles included in said online business registry, said communications link being established according to at least one business parameter within at least one of said business profiles associated with said at least two businesses, wherein said communications link is established by establishing one of a telephone call, a conference call, and a video conference based upon communication information contained at least one of the plurality of business attributes.

16.   (Currently Amended)   A machine-readable storage having stored thereon, a computer program having a plurality of code sections, said code sections executable by a machine for causing the machine to perform the steps of:

identifying a plurality of businesses to participate in an online business registry;

storing business profiles comprising business attributes in an online business registry, wherein each business profile is associated with one of the identified businesses and includes for each identified business a corresponding customer list, and wherein the business attributes corresponding to each stored business profile are classified into one of a plurality of access levels;

responsive to a query from an inquiring business, searching said online business registry to locate at least one business having a business profile including at least one business attribute corresponding to said query;

determining whether the inquiring business and at least one located business are competitors based upon a comparison of customer lists;

restricting access of the inquiring business to less than all of the plurality of access levels of business attributes of the at least one located business if the at least one located business and inquiring business are determined to be competitors;

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establishing at least one communications link between said inquiring business and said located business according to at least one business attribute of said business profile of said located business, wherein said identified businesses comprise said inquiring business and said located business.

17.   (Previously Presented)   The machine-readable storage of claim 16, wherein said online business registry conforms to a Universal Description Discovery and Integration (UDDI) specification ,and wherein said searching step comprises searching said online business registry according to said query, wherein said specified business attribute is common to said inquiring business.

18.   (Original)   The machine-readable storage of claim 16, wherein said storing step comprises storing business attributes selected from the group consisting of business identity information, business description information, and communications information.

19.   (Currently Amended)   The machine-readable storage of claim 16, wherein said establishing a communications link step comprises extracting said communications information from said business profile of said located business, wherein said online business registry categorizes business profiles according to at least one of business function and market segment, ~~and wherein said online business registry includes security features to restrict access to business profile information based upon established categories~~.

20.   (Original)   The machine-readable storage according to claim 18, wherein said storing step further comprises:

defining access rights to said business profiles;

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defining permissible communications links and points of contact as business attributes within said business profiles; and

defining selected business attributes of said business profiles as private.

21.   (Previously Presented)   The machine-readable storage of claim 16, wherein said establishing a communications link step further comprises authenticating at least said inquiring business, and wherein selected ones of said business attributes are exposed only to inquiring businesses having corresponding business attributes.

22.   (Currently Amended)   A machine-readable storage, having stored thereon a computer program having a plurality of code sections executable by a machine for causing the machine to perform the steps of:

storing business profiles for a plurality of businesses, said business profiles comprising business attributes in an online business registry, wherein each business profile is associated with one of said plurality of businesses, wherein each business profile identifies a corresponding business by market segment occupied and business function performed by the corresponding business, and wherein the business attributes corresponding to each stored business profile are classified into one of a plurality of access levels;

responsive to a query from an inquiring business specifying at least one business attribute, locating within said online business registry business profiles corresponding to said specified business attribute;

determining whether the inquiring business and at least one located business are competitors based upon a comparison of market segments and business functions corresponding to the inquiring business and at least one located business;

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restricting access of the inquiring business to less than all of the plurality of access levels of business attributes of the at least one located business if the at least one located business and inquiring business;

identifying within said located business profiles references to other business profiles contained within said online business registry; and

determining whether said other business profiles include business attributes corresponding to said query, wherein said plurality of businesses comprise businesses associated with said located business profiles, businesses associated with said other business profiles, and said inquiring business.

23. (Previously Presented) The machine-readable storage of claim 22, further comprising:

establishing a communications link between said inquiring business and at least one of said other businesses having a business attribute corresponding to said query, wherein the communication link is established according to business attributes of said at least one other business.

24. (Original) The machine-readable storage of claim 22, wherein said locating step locates within said online business registry business profiles corresponding to said specified business attribute, wherein said specified business attribute is a business identity.

25. (Original) The machine-readable storage of claim 22, wherein said locating step comprises locating in said online business registry business profiles associated with said specified business attribute of said query, wherein said specified business attribute is common to said inquiring business.

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26.   (Original)   The machine-readable storage of claim 22, wherein said storing step comprises storing business attributes selected from the group consisting of business identity information, business description information, and communications information.

27.   (Previously Presented)   The machine-readable storage of claim 26, wherein said establishing a communications link step comprises extracting said communications information from said business profile of at least one of said other businesses, and wherein said online business registry conforms to a Universal Description Discovery and Integration (UDDI) specification.

28.   (Original)   The machine-readable storage according to claim 26, wherein said storing step further comprises:

defining access rights to said business profiles;

defining permissible communications links and points of contact as business attributes within said business profiles; and

defining selected business attributes of said business profiles as private.

29.   (Original)   The machine-readable storage of claim 26, wherein said establishing a communications link step further comprises authenticating at least said inquiring business.

30.   (New)   A method of connecting businesses through common interests comprising:

storing business profiles comprising business attributes in an online business registry;

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responsive to a query from an inquiring business, searching said online business registry to locate at least one business having a business profile including at least one business attribute corresponding to said query; and

establishing at least one communications link between said inquiring business and said located business according to at least one business attribute of said business profile of said located business;

wherein said at least one communications link is established by establishing at least one of a telephone call, a conference call, and a video conference.

31. (New) The method of Claim 30, wherein the business attributes include communication information, and wherein the at least one communications link is established based upon the communication information.

32. (New) The method of Claim 31, wherein the communication information comprises at least one of a preferred contact time and a pre-selected contact person.

33. (New) The method of Claim 32, wherein the at least one communications link comprises a plurality of communications link, and wherein establishing at least one communications link further comprises selecting one of the plurality of communications links based on at least one of the preferred contact time and pre-selected contact person.

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